



**OFFICE OF FAMILY  
SUPPORT**-*Serving  
Connecticut families who  
lost loved ones in the  
September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorists'  
attacks.*

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**A SPECIAL  
MESSAGE TO  
CONNECTICUT'S  
9-11 FAMILIES**



By Brian Mattiello,  
Undersecretary CT Office  
of Policy and Management

For us at the Office of Family Support, it has been a privilege to function in the capacity that we have. Jim Sorensen, DeAnna Paugas and myself have felt so fortunate to have personally benefited from your strength and example, and so fortunate to have been guided by the same from Governor Rowland. Although we wish with every fiber in our bodies that this Office would never have been required, when the task was identified, we have tried to rise to the occasion, bring out the best in people, and make the most of government.

From the beginning, we understood that we would be working at the margins, and hoping to simply make life just a little bit easier for all of you as the healing process unfolded. What we did not anticipate was how much we would be getting in return for our service, and for that, to all of you we will forever remain indebted.

Based on the current demands on the Office and the placing in perspective the work that lies ahead, we will be making some adjustments as we move forward. We anticipate that newsletters will move to a quarterly production schedule, and Jim and DeAnna will once again assume responsibilities in the posts they held before their transfer. The Office telephone number, e-mail address, and website will stay the same, and our tasks underway will be seen to completion. Moreover, as new challenges arise, and as your needs are brought to our attention, we will look to address them as quickly as possible and in the best way we know how.

I personally look forward to your continued contact.

**TUITION WAIVERS**

The Office of Family Support recently sent letters to selected families about the tuition waivers to Connecticut's public colleges and universities. Public Act 02-126 establishes among other things tuition waivers for any resident of the state who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a terrorist victim who was a Connecticut resident.

If you did not receive this letter *and* you think you or another member of your family may be eligible for this important benefit, please contact our Office.

**NEWSLETTER  
CHANGES**

You may have noticed that our *CT Helps* newsletter has begun issuing editions every other month. Beginning with January 2003, *CT Helps* will be published on a quarterly basis. So you can expect to see the next edition in March.

Sandwiched between newsletters, we'll continue to distribute information via e-mail through the *CT Helps News*. If you're not already a subscriber, you can sign up for this service by logging onto [www.cthelps.state.ct.us](http://www.cthelps.state.ct.us)

## MESSAGES FROM THE MEMORIAL BOARD



"As I look at the faces of your loved ones caught here in moments of great joy, celebration and fun, my heart aches at your loss. I can't help but imagine the faces of my own beloved ones on this board, the agonizing pain I would feel." Lauri

**The Memorial Board will be on display at the New Fairfield Town Hall 4 Brush Hill Rd. beginning December 5<sup>TH</sup>. The Town Hall is open Tues.-Fri. 8:30-5:00 and Sat. 8:30-noon.**

"9-11 is the day for our generation when the world stood still. I will always remember being in certain places as the news broke and a sense of urgency to gather my young children close and hold on." DZ

"We have been so honored to be the first town in Connecticut to host this most poignant Memorial. Now we can put a face to at least some of the names of the victims we read about. Our loss is great. They were murdered by insanity. Our lives have been changed forever on that day 9-11-01. Our smiles have been replaced with tears and the struggles to learn to live with the pain of our loss and our loss of the future as a family. Why" E.H.

"Many prayers are with you. So sorry for your loss. God bless you and keep you strong and safe." JCS

### CT FAMILIES OFFER ADVICE ON WTC MEMORIAL

Over 30 family members attended the November 16<sup>th</sup> Connecticut 9-11 Family Meeting at the Sheraton Hotel in Stamford. Officials from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) and the Port Authority listened to ideas about rebuilding the former World Trade Center Site.

Brian Mattiello, Undersecretary at the state Office of Policy and Management convened the meeting on behalf of Governor Rowland, and the Office of Family Support and the Catholic Charities of Fairfield County.

Most of the input centered on the design of a memorial to the victims of September 11. Some reported that the site should be treated as a "cemetery" because most of the victims' remains had not been returned to their families. Others said that the site should include a museum that "showed what really happened" on September 11.

The LMDC distributed the following Draft Memorial Mission Statement to the audience:

"This Memorial remembers and honors the thousands of innocents murdered/killed in this savage attack on our democracy, the endurance of those who survived, and the courage of those who risked their lives to save others and the compassion of those who supported us in our darkest hours. May it reaffirm our resolve to preserve our freedom and to end hatred, ignorance, intolerance and strife."

Mary Fetchet and Beverly Eckert Co-Chairs of the Voices of September 11<sup>th</sup> serve on the LMDC's Family Advisory Council. They invited family members to send them questions or comments about the Mission Statement by visiting their website at [www.voicesofsept11.org](http://www.voicesofsept11.org)

Additionally, you may contact the Office of Family Support to request copies of the materials distributed at the meeting.

The LMDC and Port Authority plan on returning to Connecticut in the spring to continue their discussion about the World Trade Center site.

### THOUGHTS ON THE SEASON

For many of CT's 9-11 families the passage of time has brought a deeper appreciation of the fragility of life and love. For others, there is relief at the return of the comforting daily rhythms of a life that is *almost* like the one we had before. And for a few, the wound simply refuses to heal.

We are eternally grateful to all of you for the lessons you've taught us about compassion, hope, courage, and faith. It's been an honor and blessing to serve you. Since this is a difficult season for many, we're praying that the coming holidays' will invigorate your spirit, strengthen your family and

inspire hope in the days to come.

Peace be with you,  
*DeAnna Paugas & Jim  
Sorensen*

### **GRIEF JOURNEY LEADS TO "SPENCER HOUSE"**

Like many widows of September 11<sup>th</sup>, Cathy Spencer's grief journey began with feelings of deep sadness and loneliness. She spent days gathering information about her late husband George Spencer III for the many relief agencies. Looking for a way to step back into life, Cathy turned to the New Canaan Congregational Church. With a grateful heart for all of the warmth and friendship the church provided, she asked if there was a way to give something back to the community that had done so much for her.

With the Church's assistance, Cathy placed her energies into the renovation of Project Re-Entry a housing program for women and children in Bridgeport. Her grief turned into a labor of love as she painted walls and sewed curtains for the house. Cathy said, "The volunteers made it a safe and loving

#### **QUILTS**

Homemade quilts will be distributed to Connecticut's 9-11 families on January 25, 2003 at the Family Connections Breakfast hosted by the Family & Children's Agency. Ms. Betty Nielsen of Freedom Quilts is looking forward to coming to Connecticut to share these quilts. This Iowa volunteer group has already distributed hundreds of quilts in New York. More information about this event will be forthcoming.

place for me." Because of Cathy's volunteer efforts and in honor of her late husband George, Project Re-Entry recently re-named their house "The Spencer House."

### **REFLECTIONS by Brian Mattiello**

It has been 15 months since the moment tragedy struck on 9/11/01, although still fresh are the images, the conversations, and the reflections from that day. With this time gone by, you can sense now more than ever how its passage really flows, how profound the incident was, and how powerful the response has been.

One aspect of this tragedy that I have been fully engaged in is the relationship between government and victim's families, which was formed immediately and out of necessity. Although complex and multi-dimensional, the heart of the relationship is simple: health and welfare of people. In Connecticut, for most, it began with a phone call from Governor John G. Rowland. And, through his personal commitment to you, the last 15 months through his Office of Family Support has been about addressing and serving common goals and common interests.

In this time, and through this relationship, you have spiritually changed a Governor, redefined a government, and have given to every individual in this State a deeper understanding of the human capacity to withstand pain. From you we have learned that patience is not just a virtue, but a necessity, and that the healing process does not happen in isolation, nor does it happen with speed. You have shown the courage to let fear show, and tears fall, but with an unyielding desire to stay strong and maintain your roles as a member of a family and a community.

Still, there will long be a certain fragility to recovery – when a word, a thought, a smell or sound reminds you of your loved one, it may feel as a setback, but in my mind it is the healing process at work. Lest we misinterpret uncertainty as a weakness, you have also reminded us that it is times like these in life that offer us the opportunity to gain new understanding of who we are as a people, and as a community of people.

The Governor recently said that all of us fear dark times, but life

***MOVING? Please let our Office know if your mailing address changes. This is important to us, as we want to continue to keep you informed. Thank you.***

provides them just the same. But once in them, we have learned from you that one can call upon the memories and the love we have felt for a wife, a husband, a child, and this rekindling identifies a source of power and courage that lights ones way out of darkness – and such light makes every darkness bearable.

And, from you we have learned that no one should feel a sense of apology for their healing through either the intimacy of silence or through more expressive means. There is no right or wrong way to grieve or to heal. There is only what works – and what works for you.

Setting your own standards, pace and terms, is the very least that you owe yourself.

What we owe you, in the name of those whom you've loved and lost, is to take these lessons and truly learn from them. Please know that to this proposition, with unhealed hearts and the continued presence of hardship among you, and with a world still trying to make sense of yesterday, I shall remain dedicated – today and every day of my life thereafter.